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SOURCE As indicated

THE DANUBE FLOOD IN HUNGARY
IN THE THIRD WEEK OF JULY 1954

[Summary: The following report gives a fairly complete picture of the Danube flood in Hungary which occurred in the third week of July 1954.

Extensive damage appears to have resulted only in the so-called Szigetkoz, an area between Rajka and Gyor enclosed within the main channel and a branch of the Danube. This area is reported completely devastated.

South of Gyor, the damage appears to have been minor. In Budapest, including Csepel Island, and Sztalinvaros no damage has been reported; and the electric power, gas, and transportation services continued to function without interruption in these cities.

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Along the lower Danube, only water seepage, with probable loss of some crops.

Numbers in parentheses refer to appended sources.]

Hydrological Directorate Issues Flood Warning

The Orszagos Vizugyi Fozgazgatosag (National Hydrological Chief Directorate) has issued the following statement:

Because of recent extremely heavy rains in Austria, which exceeded 100 millimeters on several days, mountain snow began to melt rapidly, and floods resulted along the Austrian section of the Danube.

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The water level of the Danube is unusually high in Hungary, especially near Gyor. The maximum water level at Budapest is expected in the middle of next week. The flood which reached Hungary is moderate, because the Vienna basin and the Csallokoz flood areas are absorbing huge volumes of water. The flood along the Hungarian section of the Danube is expected to last from 18 to 20 July. (1)

Austrian Dam Breaks Blamed For Possible Flood Duration Increase

The following statement has been issued by the Orszagos Vizugyi Foigazgatóság:

On 13 July, the water level of the Danube along the Hungarian section rose by 35-45 centimeters. A similar rise may be expected on 14 July. The maximum, at 730 centimeters, at Budapest may be expected at the end of the current week.

Because of the collapse of the dams in several places in Austria, the flood may last for a longer time in Hungary. Reinforcement of the Hungarian dams with the assistance of the army is in progress. (2)

Create Flood Emergency Organization

The Hungarian Council of Ministers has appointed Kalman Rajczi, chief of the Orszagos Vizugyi Foigazgatóság, commissioner for the flood emergency.

The Council of Ministers also ordered all local councils along the Danube to protect the inhabitants, gather in the crops, and evacuate the livestock.

When government assistance is needed, the local councils are required to communicate with the flood emergency organization by calling Budapest kozvetlen (direct) 51 on the telephone. (2)

Austrian Water Level Falls, But Danube Breaks Through Hungarian Dams

The Arvedelmi Kormanybiztosság (Flood Control Commission) has issued the following announcement:

The Danube is receding along its Austrian section. The water level fell by 8 centimeters at Bratislava by 16 July.

On the 15 July, the Danube broke through the dams in two places in the Szigetkoz, and evacuation has been speeded up. No casualties have been reported anywhere.

The situation of the city of Gyor has become precarious. At Budapest, the water level stood at 769 centimeters on 16 July, and it is expected that the maximum, approximately 800 centimeters, will be reached on 18 or 19 July. (3)

Flood Peak Moves Downstream

The peak of the Danube flood reached Szatmar and Dunafoldvar in the evening of 20 July. At Budapest, the water level fell to 791 centimeters on 20 July and by a further 6 centimeters on the 21 July. At Dunafoldvar, the water level remained unchanged at 650 centimeters and at Paks, at 816 centimeters. (4)

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C-O-N-F-I-D-E-N-T-I-A-LWater Level Falls At Budapest

Bratislava reported a 73-centimeter fall in the water level of the Danube during the last 24 hours. At the same time, the water level fell by 13 centimeters in the Szigetkoz, near Gyor-Revfalu.

At Budapest, the water level stood at 780 centimeters at 1400 hours on July 21, that is, 25 centimeters below the maximum on 19 July.

At present, the crest of the flood is located between Paks and Baja, where the water level stood at 900 centimeters at 1300 hours on 21 July. (5)

Summary of Damage

Gyorgy Jaranyi, chief of the Irrigation and Soil Melioration Department of the Ministry of Agriculture, made the following statement:

The Danube flood inundated approximately 68,000 cadastral yokes of land and has caused heavy damage to crops. Where the land is still under water, the plants have been completely destroyed; where the land was inundated for only a few days, the crop damage is less.

The most urgent task is to drain the pools of water which remain. After the flood has receded, the root crops will still be in danger because of the mud which clogs the roots. (6)

Flood-Control Activity Relaxed As Water Continues to Recede

The Flood-Control Commission has published the following report:

The water level of the Danube continues to fall along the Austrian and Hungarian sections of the river. At 1200 hours on 28 July, the water level was 857 centimeters high at Mohacs, showing a drop of 67 centimeters from the crest. The water is receding from the Szigetkoz and has completely disappeared in several areas.

On 28 July, flood-control activity, even along the Baja and Mohacs sections, was restricted to observation service.

The following persons have distinguished themselves in flood-control work: Sandor Horvath, deputy commissioner of flood control; Karoly Stelczer, Laszlo Helbenyi, and Bela Varga, chief engineers; and Ferenc Tarro, technician.. (7)

Details on Heavy Flood Damage

The 28 towns of Szigetkoz were completely destroyed by the Danube flood. Most of the Szigetkoz is under several meters of water, and practically the entire livestock of the area perished. No official announcement has been made on the loss of lives.

Revfalu, a suburb of Gyor, is under 2 meters of water, and destruction of property is considerable throughout Gyor. In the center of the city, the Sziget and Ujvaros districts had to be evacuated. In the Gyor area, the Danube flood was aggravated by the flood waters of the Raba and Rabca rivers. The industrial plants of Gyor have stopped working, and their 15,000 employees worked at the dams.

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Szentendre Island [approximately 10 miles north of Budapest] is largely flooded, and 12,000 cadastral yokes of agricultural land there are under water.

No official announcement has been made on the flood damage at Budapest. It is said that the Nagytetyeny and the Obuda shipyards are under water. For several days, over 10,000 men have been working at the Albertfalva dams, where a breakthrough and heavy underground seepage had occurred. Part of Obuda is reported flooded.

Along the lower Danube, between Adony and Gerjen, on the west side of the river, the flooded agricultural area is officially estimated at 25,000 cadastral yokes. At Szalkszentmarton, across the Danube from Sztalinvaros, the Danube broke through the dam and inundated thousands of cadastral yokes of land.

Margitsziget at Budapest is also reported under water.

In the vicinity of Mohacs, the flood is approaching its peak and the water level stands at 925 centimeters.

West of the Danube, the Sio, Sarviz, and Dunavolgy (Atok) canals are flowing backward and their surrounding areas are largely flooded.

According to official announcements, the total flooded area is estimated at 150,000-200,000 cadastral yokes and the loss of crops, at 1.5-2 million quintals. (8)

The flood damage in Szigetkoz has been officially estimated at several hundred million forints. Heavy losses have occurred also in the vicinity of Komarom. Along the lower Danube, substantial damage has been caused by underground seepage. (9)

SOURCES

1. Budapest, Szabad Nep, 11 Jul 54
2. Ibid., 14 Jul 54
3. Ibid., 17 Jul 54
4. Ibid., 21 Jul 54
5. Ibid., 22 Jul 54
6. Ibid., 28 Jul 54
7. Ibid., 29 Jul 54
8. Munich, Uj Hungaria, 30 Jul 54
9. Ibid., 6 Aug 54

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